

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISTANB 02633 01 OF 02 060535Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9107
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISTANBUL 2633

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, TU
SUBJECT: REACTION TO NEW GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY: WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS REACTION IN ISTANBUL GENERALLY
NEGATIVE AMONG BUSINESSMEN, LABOR LEADERS AND INTELLECTUALS TO
VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FOR NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT. DESPITE
WIDESPREAD SUPPORT ECEVIT'S REPUBLIC PEOPLES PARTY (RPP)
ENJOYS HERE, HOWEVER, SO FAR THERE SEEMS TO BE GRUDGING ACCEPTANCE
DEMIREL GOVERNMENT WHICH IT IS NOTED WAS FORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH
CONSTITUTION. NOTABLE EXCEPTION, OF COURSE, ARE MILITANT LEFTIST
GROUPS WHO, IN ADDITION TO RECENT BOMBINGS, WERE REPORTEDLY
RESPONSIBLE FOR KILLING TWO RIGHTIST YOUTHS THIS WEEK. ON OTHER
HAND CONGEN FOUND GROUP OF POLICE OFFICERS ELATED OVER DEMIREL
VICTORY IN UNUSUAL DISPLAY OF PARTISAN SENTIMENT.
OTHERWISE, FEW HERE SEEM OPTIMISTIC THAT DEMIREL GOVERNMENT
CAN SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVE MANY PRESSING PROBLEMS TURKEY FACES.
MOST ANTICIPATE POLITICAL VIOLENCE WILL GET WORSE AND THEY DO
NOT EXPECT COALITION WILL LAST LONG. IMMEDIATE THREAT TO
GOVERNMENT POSED BY GENERAL STRIKE, HOWEVER, MAY NOT MATERIALIZE
OR HAVE MINIMUM IMPACT IN VIEW OF TOP UNION LEADERS LACK OF
ENTHUSIASM FOR SUCH PROTEST. CRITICISM OF ECEVIT ESPECIALLY
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PAGE 02 ISTANB 02633 01 OF 02 060535Z

IN INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES HAS PROMPTED TALK THAT RPP LEADER
CAN EXPECT INTERNAL CHALLENGE TO HIS LEADERSHIP. END

1. IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH MEMBERS OF ISTANBUL BUSINESS
COMMUNITY, CONGEN OFFICERS HAVE FOUND LITTLE ENTHUSIASM FOR
NEW GOVERNMENT; WE BELIEVE THIS DUE IN LARGE PART TO
ANTIPATHY TOWARD COALITION PARTNER, NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY

(NSP). MANY SEE PRESENT GOVERNMENT AS TEMPORARY PHENOMENA, AND WISHFULLY HOPE FOR GRAND COALITION BETWEEN DEMIREL'S JUSTICE PARTY AND RPP WHICH THEY FEEL IS ONLY STABLE ALTERNATIVE UNDER CURRENT PARLIAMENTARY ARITHMETIC. THERE ARE HARD DECISIONS IN THE ECONOMIC AREA ON WHICH A NUMBER OF BUSINESSMEN SEEM RELATIVELY CONFIDENT THAT THIS GOVERNMENT WILL EVENTUALLY BE FORCED TO MAKE. (AS EMBASSY POINTS OUT IN ANKARA 5707, THESE ARE AT SAME TIME DECISIONS WHICH WILL PUT GREAT STRESS ON UNITY OF COALITION.) NUMBER OF THEM WERE GLAD TO SEE RPP FINANCE MINISTER USTUNEL LEAVE. SO FAR AS THEY ARE CONCERNED ANY CHANGE WAS ONE FOR BETTER. ON PROSPECT OF TURK-IS-ENGINEERED GENERAL STRIKE, OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT BUSINESSMEN HERE AND ESPECIALLY SOME INDUSTRIALISTS, SURPRISINGLY UNCONCERNED. GIVEN CURRENT PERIOD OF ELECTRICITY SHORTAGES, IMPORT RESTRICTIONS AND WORKER VACATIONS WHICH HAVE CUT PRODUCTION DRASTICALLY, SOME ALMOST WELCOME PROSPECT OF SHUTTING DOWN THEIR PLANTS. A SIDE BENEFIT MIGHT ALSO BE OPPORTUNITY TO CONSERVE STOCKS OF MATERIALS AS HEDGE AGAINST INFLATIONARY TRENDS AND FUTURE CURRENCY DEVALUATIONS WHICH WIDELY EXPECTED.

2. CITY'S INTELLIGENTSIA SEEM PARTICULARLY DEPRESSED OVER ECEVIT'S FAILURE TO CARRY OFF THEIR LONG-ANTICIPATED RESTORATION TO INFLUENCE. ALTHOUGH IT ALSO COMES TO SOME EXTENT FROM OTHER CIRCLES, THE MOST SEVERE CRITICISM OF THE RPP CHAIRMAN'S MISTAKES IN HIS ATTEMPT TO FORM A GOVERNMENT COME FROM THIS

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PAGE 03 ISTANB 02633 01 OF 02 060535Z

GROUP. THIS ACUTE DISAPPOINTMENT IN ECEVIT BY LEFTIST INTELLECTUALS HAS SPARKED RUMORS THAT HE MAY HAVE TROUBLE KEEPING CONTROL OF THE RPP. PROFESSORS ARE DEEPLY PESSIMISTIC THAT CLASHES BETWEEN RIGHT AND LEFT WILL BECOME EVEN MORE WIDESPREAD IN THE COMING ACADEMIC YEAR. THERE IS SOME GUARDED HOPE THAT THE NEW MINISTER OF INTERIOR, WHO IS GENERALLY WELL REGARDED, WILL DO BETTER THAN HIS PREDECESSOR AT RESTRAINING POLITICAL VIOLENCE. BUT MOST OBSERVERS HERE EXPECT THE SECOND NATIONAL FRONT GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE A WORSE STUDENT VIOLENCE PROBLEM THAN THE FIRST.

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PAGE 01 ISTANB 02633 02 OF 02 060543Z

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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ISTANBUL 2633

3. CONGEN OFFICERS FOUND INTERESTING EXCEPTION TO GENERALLY
NEGATIVE RESPONSE TO NEW GOVERNMENT. GROUP OF FIRST SECTION
POLICE WE ENTERTAINED A FEW HOURS AFTER VOTE OF CONFIDENCE
WERE OPENLY JUBILANT OVER DEMIREL'S SUCCESS. THEY STRONGLY
BELIEVED JP CHAIRMAN WAS BEST MAN TO COMBAT "COMMUNIST" THREAT.
THEIR VIEWS PARALLEL NEW GOVERNMENT'S ANALYSIS IN ITS PROGRAM
THAT POLITICAL VIOLENCE WAS DUE TO COMMUNIST ATTEMPTS TO
UNDERMINE TURKISH DEMOCRACY. WE WOULD EXPECT THESE POLICEMEN, WHO
ARE ON FRONT LINES OF TURKEY'S STRUGGLE AGAINST POLITICAL VIOLENCE
AND HAVE SEEN MANY IN THEIR RANKS KILLED IN ENCOUNTERS WITH
LEFTIST MILITANTS, TO BE ILL-DISPOSED TOWARD THE LEFT. HOWEVER,
THIS RARE (FOR TURKISH GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES) DISPLAY OF PARTISAN
SENTIMENT DID LITTLE TO SHORE UP OUR HOPES THAT ISTANBUL POLICE
WILL SHOW THE EVEN-HANDED LAW ENFORCEMENT NECESSARY TO AVOID
EXACERBATING THE CITY'S POLITICAL VIOLENCE PROBLEM.

4. MOST SERIOUS THREAT SINCE FORMATION OF COALITION GOVERNMENT
SEEMED TO US TO COME FROM ORGANIZED LABOR WHEN TURK-IS LEADER
HALIL TUNC'S RAISED SPECTER OF GENERAL STRIKE (ANKARA
5303). DESPITE BUSINESSMENS' LACK OF CONCERN MENTIONED ABOVE,
SUCH ACTION BY TURK-IS' ONE MILLION PLUS MEMBERS COULD CAUSE
GOVERNMENT REAL PROBLEMS. OUR RECENT SOUNDINGS OF TURK-IS
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PAGE 02 ISTANB 02633 02 OF 02 060543Z

UNION LEADERS INDICATE HOWEVER, THAT TUNC WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY
SELLING GENERAL STRIKE TO HIS AFFILIATED UNIONS. PRESIDENT
OF TURK-IS FOOD PROCESSING WORKERS' UNION (TEKGIDA-IS) WHICH
IS LARGEST IN CONFEDERATION, TOLD CONGEN OFFICER THAT, ALTHOUGH
HE SHARES TUNC'S OBJECTIONS TO NATIONAL ACTION PARTY (NAP) AND
NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) PARTICIPATION IN COALITION AND
STRONGLY FAVORS A GRAND COALITION, HE OPPOSES IDEA OF GENERAL
STRIKE. MUNICIPAL WORKERS UNION PRESIDENT EXPRESSED SIMILAR
SENTIMENTS, AND VENTURED TO PREDICT THAT THERE WOULD BE NO
GENERAL STRIKE. REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF TURK-IS IN ISTANBUL
FELT THAT TUNC WOULD GET THE NECESSARY VOTES IN THE 41-MEMBER

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD TO CALL A GENERAL STRIKE BUT STATED IT
WOULD PROBABLY LAST MAXIMUM ONE DAY AND PERHAPS ONLY A FEW HOURS.

5. TO HAVE GREATEST IMPACT, GENERAL STRIKE WOULD NEED TO
INCLUDE PARTICIPATION OF TURKEY'S SECOND LARGEST LABOR CONFEDERATION,
TURK-IS, ARCH RIVAL, THE LEFTIST DISK CONFEDERATION. TURK-IS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, BY RAZOR-THIN MARGIN, VOTED TO CONSIDER
BOTH GENERAL STRIKE AND DISK'S PROPOSAL THAT THE TWO CONFEDERA-
TIONS COOPERATE IN OPPOSING NATIONAL FRONT. ALL THREE LABOR
LEADERS MENTIONED ABOVE STRONGLY REJECTED ANY POSSIBILITY THAT
TURK-IS
WOULD COOPERATE WITH "COMMUNIST" DISK. THERE ARE OTHER MAJOR
TURK-IS UNIONS IN ISTANBUL AREA FROM SO-CALLED SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC
GROUP WHO WILL LIKELY SUPPORT GENERAL STRIKE PROPOSAL AND PERHAPS
ENDORSE DISK PARTICIPATION IN IT. IMPORTANT PETROLEUM WORKERS'
UNION (PETROL-IS) MAY BE ONE OF THESE. OUR GENERAL IMPRESSION,
HOWEVER, IS THAT THE MAJORITY OF TURK-IS UNIONS HERE ARE READY
TO CLIMB OUT OF POLITICAL ARENA, AND, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME
BEING, ACCEPT DEMIREL'S PARLIAMENTARY VICTORY. FOOD WORKERS'
PRESIDENT COMMENTED THAT, ALTHOUGH THEY DO NOT LIKE NEW
GOVERNMENT THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT THAT IT WAS LEGITIMATELY
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PAGE 03 ISTANB 02633 02 OF 02 060543Z

AND THEY HAVE DEEP COMMITMENT TO CONTINUED FUNCTIONING OF
TURKISH DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM.
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